

Most Toronto childcare centres have not yet signed on to \$10-a-day care. Here's why ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

With a Sept. 1 deadline approaching, most Toronto childcare centres have not yet signed on to deliver \$10-a-day care.

Ontario's \$13.2 billion agreement with the federal government is structured in such a way that it puts the onus on municipalities to enrol licensed centres and agencies into the new system and distribute money, which will then be used to reduce the fees being charged to parents – by 25 per cent as of April 1 of this year and by 50 per cent as of Jan. 1 of next year.

Toronto's registration portal opened June 6. The city tells CTV News Toronto that of its 1,042 licensed centres, 272 have opted in to the program while nine have opted out.

Eloise Morrison, supervisor at Scarborough's Teach Me To Fly Preschool has opted in, but says the plan has created an "accounting nightmare" with lingering questions.

"I still don't have answers to give parents on when or why or how. That's frustrating for us," Morrison said.

Maggie Moser, CEO of Blossoming Minds Learning Centre on the Danforth explains that the current funding model would not be sufficient to help operators recoup monies lost to cutting fees for parents.

"The terms that we have now would definitely lead to bankruptcy," Moser warns.

Moser, a director with the Ontario Association of Independent Childcare Centres says none of their roughly 1,000 members have signed on to the program because of unaddressed concerns, including over funding into 2023 and beyond.

Operators aren't getting a concrete funding allotment until after they've opted in and presented with a contract.

"We're really being asked to sign onto a mortgage without knowing the interest rate," Moser said.

The city says opting in is only a starting point.

"Centres do have the ability to withdraw from the process if later down the road they decide that they're not interested," Shanley McNamee, general manager of Children Services for Toronto, said.

McNamee explains that checks and balances are required are sign-up to ensure provincial funding is being used for its intended purpose.

Moser worries about the particulars about an operator changing their mind and confusing parents.

"That's very disruptive to the business, to the system to parents' childcare. With everyone scrambling looking for spots, it's already making everyone highly stressed."

McNamee says the province has committed to discussions this summer around a new funding model for 2023.

Moser feels the only one to create stability for existing operators is to have longer-term contracts.

"Where we know what funding we are getting and that we are getting virtually what we are giving up so that we're not the ones funding the system."

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: child care ^[4]

\$10 a day ^[5]

funding ^[6]

Links

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